



RADIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF CONNECTICUT, INC.
A CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF RADIOLOGY

Statement of Dr. Jean Weigert
Radiological Society of Connecticut
Before the Insurance and Real Estate Committee
Senate Bill 10
February 18, 2014

Sen. Crisco, Rep. Megna and members of the committee:

My name is Jean Weigert and I am a Radiologist and director of Women's Imaging at the Hospitals of Central Connecticut, New Britain and Southington Conn. In my role as President of the Radiological Society of Connecticut, I now present testimony on its behalf in support of Senate Bill 10. I will first present our reasons for support, and then suggest amended language ensure that the intent of the bill is realized.

As you know, Connecticut was the first state in the country to mandate insurance coverage of breast ultrasound in patients' with dense breasts. Our statute has since been emulated in many other states. Our pioneering legislation presented an early and unique opportunity to investigate whether there is earlier diagnosis of breast cancers in this group of women. A UCONN Medical Student and I have published two research papers demonstrating a doubling of the yield in finding cancers when compared with mammograms alone. The citations for these papers are included with the testimony.

Unfortunately, despite the demonstrated efficacy of the test, we are seeing only 30-40% of eligible patients coming in for this important preventive service, with no significant increase in the second and third years of our study. This is mainly due to the out of pocket cost to women who could benefit from ultrasound screening.

So, we have an effective screening test that can save the lives of Connecticut women, but they are staying away because of inconsistent insurance coverage. Thus, it behooves us to have unambiguous language that will prevent misinterpretations from impairing the intent of the bill. Unfortunately, there is currently no AMA procedure code that is specific for language used in the bill, referring to the test as: "Comprehensive ultrasound

screening of an entire breast or breasts..." We propose a less specific and more applicable substitute in all four instances: "ultrasound examination of the breast or breasts..." In addition, the intent of the bill is that there not be a cost to patients for this test. Accordingly, the language should add the words "or co-pay" wherever it stipulates that there not be a deductible, thereby eliminating any confusion over co-pays vs. deductibles.

In closing, RSC commends the committee for your continuing leadership on this issue. Our research here in Connecticut validates your pioneering support of the need for coverage of ultrasound in women with dense breast tissue, as it detects breast cancers that were missed by the initial mammogram. The language of the bill must be clear to effectuate our goals, and we hope you will accept the language we suggest.

Weigert JW and Steenbergen S. The Connecticut Experiment: The Role of Ultrasound in the Screening of Women with Dense Breasts. The Breast Journal (2012) 18(6), 517-122.

Steenbergen S and Weigert JM, The Connecticut Initiative: Screening Breast Ultrasound in Women with Dense Breasts, Two Years of Data Presented at The American Roentgen Ray Society meeting April 2013, Washington DC